Press release

The Met Office plays crucial global role

17 January 2002

In a visit to the Met Office yesterday, the Secretary of State for Defence, the Rt Hon Geoffrey Hoon, paid tribute to the people who advised the Government during the foot-and-mouth crisis and are helping the MoD in the global war on terrorism.

In a speech to staff Mr Hoon said: "Right across Government we are aware of the Met Office's contribution to the success of Operation Veritas and, as the chairman of the Cabinet committee during the foot-and-mouth outbreak, I recognise how crucial the information we were given by the Met Office was."

Mr Hoon was speaking during a whistle-stop tour of the Met Office's headquarters in Bracknell, during which he saw the diverse, vital services the office provides. The Met Office's Mobile Met. Unit is currently playing a crucial supporting role helping the Ministry of Defence during the war in Afghanistan. The unit supplies weather observations and forecasts 24 hours a day, seven days a week to detached personnel on operations and exercises throughout the world. During last year's foot-and-mouth outbreak the Met Office provided information and advice to MAFF (now DEFRA) and the Institute for Animal Health, in the form of trajectory forecasts, which helped with daily planning.

Peter Ewins, Chief Executive of the Met Office (left) and Geoffrey Hoon, Defence Secretary (right), meet prior to a tour of the Met Office headquarters.

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